

Jefferson Bee---
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"Great Places" pilot project sought locally

In response to an initiative announced by Governor Tom Vilsack earlier this year, the Midwest Partnership regional development organization has invited the Great Places advisory committee to look at the three-county region of Greene, Guthrie and Adair counties as one of three pilot areas that will be named as "Iowa Great Places."

The challenge offered by Vilsack combines the services and resources of 18 state agencies as "one-stop shop". The intent of the program is to challenge Iowans to be bold and creative in re-imagining their "place", and a challenge to state government to do its work in a different, more responsive way.

Over the next few months the region will have access to a "coach" to help it prepare to make a final presentation to the Great Places citizen advisory board in September in hopes of becoming one of the pilot project areas. The initiative focuses on seven aspects for each place:

A unique sense of place, engaging experiences, a rich social fabric, a vital economy, a pleasing environment, a strong foundation, and a creative culture.

"These aspects are each affected by the work that Midwest Partnership does throughout our region. While we focus directly on some of them, others are indirectly affected by us and our partners in each community, such as the city, Chamber of Commerce, and local development boards," state Angie Duncan, planning and community program manager for Midwest Partnership. "This initiative gives us another tool to help our communities and get them directly involved with the work we do around the region."

Over the next month a team of representatives from each of the 21 communities and three counties in the region will be assembled to work with the coaches provided in preparation of presenting the Midwest Partnership region as a "great place." For more information, or to volunteer as a representative for your area, contact Midwest Partnership at (641) 755-3456.